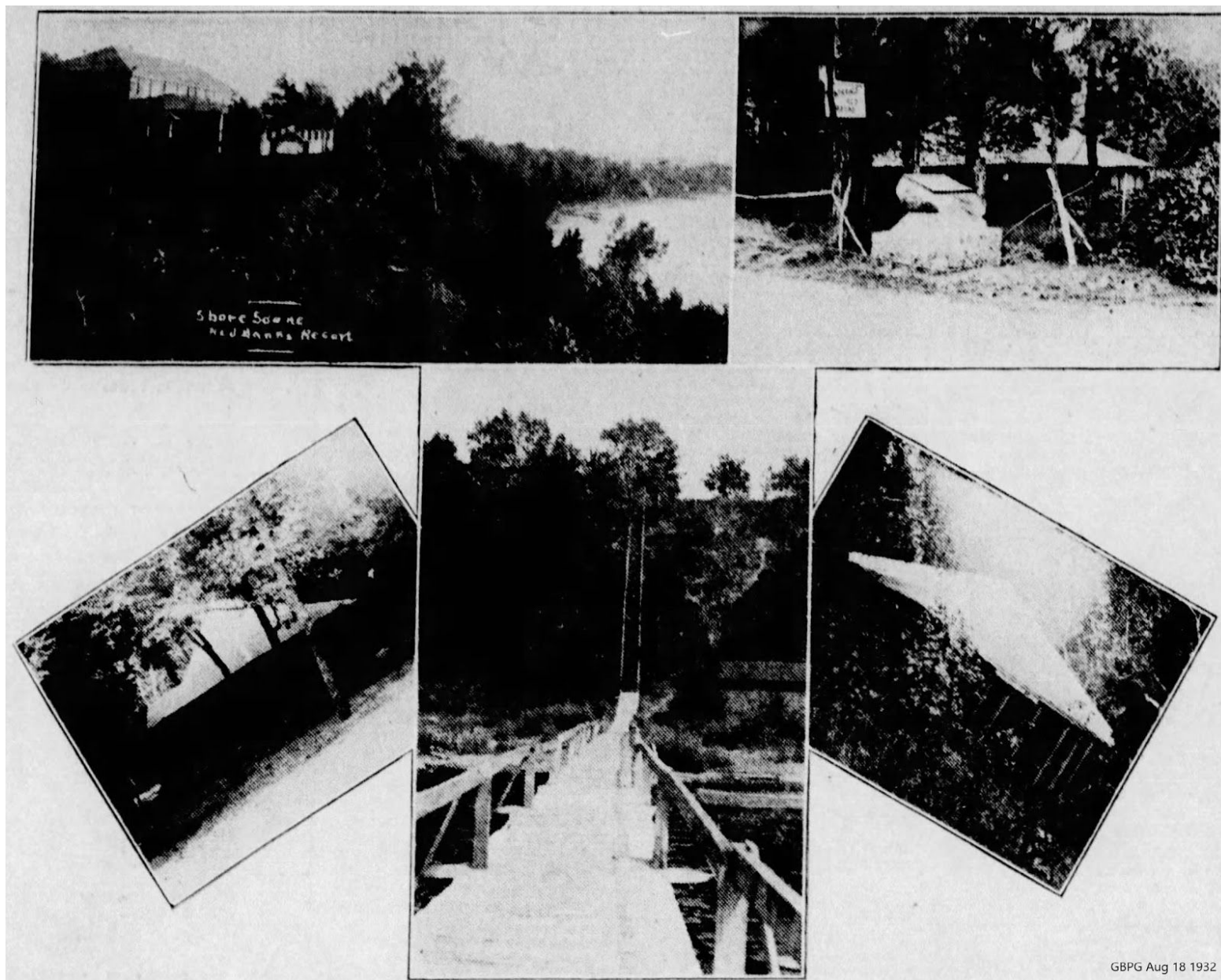


Benderville Is The Oldest Summer Colony In The Green Bay Region



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Historic Red Banks is most impressive in its location, as may be judged from the scenes shown above. At the upper left is a view of the shore, which rises 100 feet above the bay. The pavilion tops the bank, and its veranda facing the west affords an excellent view of the sunsets which are Red Bank's most beautiful asset. The stairway of 117 steps, leading from the dock to the pavilion atop the bluff, is shown in the lower photos, and what a climb those stairs are!

In the upper right hand picture is shown the corner near where the two summer resort roads join. The boulder in the foreground bears a plaque designating the place where Jean Nicolet is believed to have landed almost 300 years ago. The sign nailed to the tree nearby reads "Entrance to Red Banks," and in the background is the Willian Engles, summer home, surrounded by cedars and pines. Mrs. Engles is building a pretentious rock garden at present, and has collected many interesting stones from surrounding territory. There is a large piece of coral, a peculiar white stone with all the markings of a human face, and some genuine rock garden stones.

The octagonal shaped cottage at the lower left belongs to John Joslin who plans to live at Benderville the year round. It is a unique and attractive place to live, with all sides enclosed by a screened porch, and the woodwork painted orange, contrasting the brown wood of the cottage. At the lower right is Waubunoqua lodge where Judge and Mrs. Carlton Merrill and Miss Janet Merrill spend their summers. It was built by Mrs. Merrill and her mother, Mrs. E. A. Baker, descendants of one of the first prominent families in the northwest and is called after the name Indians gave Mrs. Baker, "Waubunoqua," meaning Rising Dawn.

“Kish-Ke-Kwan-Te-No,” “Benderville,” “Red Banks,” the historic promontory ten miles northeast of Green Bay has been known by all of these names - is the oldest summer colony in this vicinity. Its development dates back to 1891.

“Kish-ke-kwan-te-no” meaning sloping to the cedars, is the name the Indians gave to this place accepted for history as the approximate location of the landing of Sieur Jean Nicolet, first white man to set foot in the vast territory west of the lakes. The intrepid Frenchman with a small number of Huron guides, had been despatched by Samuel de Champlain, governor of New France, to seek out the supposed possible trade route by the water to the China Sea and Orient.

Turning his canoe into La Baye Verte, Nicolet beheld the high cliffs of red clay (whence comes the appellation Red Banks) and upon them a host of men darker than Caucasians and lighter, he thought, than Indians. Donning a gaily embroidered robe like a mandarin’s garb he stepped from his canoe and saluted the crowd with pistol shots. The Winnebago women and children fled to the hinterland in terror, and the stalwarts fell down to worship the “god of thunder with noise and fire in his hands.”

Thus Nicolet literally opened the country to the white man and not many years after, Perrot was here opening barter and trade. Then came the De Landlades, permanent settlers, and before the century ended the French had built a fort. And from then on “people have been coming to Green Bay.”

Has Historical Interest

With this background, Red Banks is one of the most interesting spots, historically speaking, that has been visited in cleaning information for the summer resort features. Its promises to come into greater prominence when the tercentenary of landing of Nicolet is observed in 1934, and while it is our purpose here merely to record its development as a summer vacation land, it is good to find so many names in the “Benderville” annals that hearken back to “Kish-ke-kwan-te-no,” in their attachment to things historical.

“Benderville” is a purely summer resort cognomen, taken from the name of a man who in 1891 purchased the ten acre tract of land owned by the Episcopal Bishop, Seymour, of Springfield, Ill. Louis Bender replatted the entire area and laid out the road which is now the main artery to the vacation centers along the east shore of the bay, Mr. Bender found great difficulty in “selling” the idea of a summer community to residents of Green bay, for business men then out in six full days a week at the office or store, and a drive out to “Benderville” by horse and buggy would consume half a day, leaving little time for recreation.

Gradually, however, the idea took root, and before 1900 there were at least ten cottages built in the Bender tract. These pioneers in summer resorts were the late Ben Garlock, John Schumacher, Mrs. E. A. Baket and her daughters, Mrs. Carlton Merrill, the Misses Marie and Elizabeth Desnoyers, Miss Minnie Kelleher, Bishop Sebastian G. Messmer and Father J. J. Fox, John Beth, Frank and Arthur Duchateau, John Wilcox, and J. H. Taylor. Later came Mrs. Charles Wheelock, mother of the well known Kate Wheelock who is now in the East, Miss Ellen Gunn, Miss Luckenback, A. Piraux, F. J. Hannon, Wilber J. Fisk, D. W. Britton, Adam Spuhler, and Carl Bleidung.

Beat Made Daily Trips

The “Nettie Denssen” made two trips daily to Red Banks before automobile transportation became common, and a long dock projected out into the bay with a board landing for passengers. In winter this dock had to be torn down for severe storms would have dashed it to pieces. Even in the summer there were many times when because of heavy seas a landing was extremely dangerous and sometimes impossible.

Mr. and Mrs. Louis Bender built the first pavilion at Red banks in 1892, and the original structure still forms a part of the large building which is a composition of additions built on at various periods. The Benders operated a summer hotel where the cottages obtained their meals, for 28 years. They had an aristocratic clientele from the cities as well as

Green Bay. It was Mr. Bender too who built the long stairway leading down to the bay, which is still one of the unusual attractions of Red Banks.

Operation of the hotel and pavilion at Red Banks changed hands several times after Mr. Bender retired, but for the past eight years has been in charge of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Unsin. A grocery store and confectionery is the extent of the pavilion enterprises at the present, for the hotel has been discontinued, and the public dance hall is now just a large veranda overlooking the bay.

Summer Population Transient

The summer population at Red Banks is somewhat transient, many of the cottages being rented for periods of from one week to one month, and some are occupied by their owners just over the week-end. The Carlton Merrills have been the most constant resorters, having spent every summer for the past 35 years at Red Banks. Ben Garlock's cottage now belongs to Louis Kemnitz; Frank Duchateau has moved his to Point Sauble where it is used as a hunting lodge; Wilcon's is occupied by his daughters, Mrs. Charles Hume and Miss Florence Wilcox. J. H. Tayler's has been remodeled by John Joslin; John Kitslaar owns the former Beth place; Hans Nelson has acquired the D. W. Britton property; the William Engles have succeeded the F. J. Jannons in the cottage at the corner entrance to Red Banks; A. Douville and Edger have the Wheelock home; and George Gazette is owner of the log house built by Bishop Messmer and Father Fox as a summer mission place.

The Piraux still spend their summers at Red Banks. "Stag lodge," at the turn in the road going through Red Banks is occupied by Otto Rahr, "Bill" Garot and Edward O'Connor, Mad Madsen lives at Red Banks the year round. Other home owners are; Jules M. Parmentier, David La Plant, Henry Van Donsel, Frank Decker (the remodeled Charles Baker cottage), Charles Speerschneider, Edward Garot, William Hood, Abner Petiniet, (the Kowlan place), J. A. Gagnon, Charles Dupont, William Bodart, Jack McDonald, Miss Mary K. Platten, a Chicago teacher, A. L. Schultz, Edward Agemaite, Miss Jennie Spuhler, Otto L. Mortensen, and Henry Willaert.